



No Fellowship with Slavery.

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# A SERMON

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By GEORGE THACHER,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

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NOTE. The following discourse when delivered was in great part unwritten. In preparing it for the press, it has been necessarily revised and improved. It is published at the request and expense of many members of the congregation to which it was preached.

G. T.

# S E R M O N .

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“AND HAVE NO FELLOWSHIP WITH THE UNFRUITFUL WORKS OF DARKNESS, BUT RATHER REPROVE THEM.” EPHESIANS 5: 11.

THREE great evils afflict our race—ignorance, sin, and suffering. Each of these is a cause, an effect, and an accompaniment of the others: they are entirely reciprocal in their operations and results.

To express these three curses of humanity, the sacred writers employ the figurative term *darkness*, because of the obvious analogy between the absence of light on the one hand, and the want of truth, or goodness, or happiness on the other.

Although these evils are, as has been said, wholly mutual in their influences, each producing the other two, yet undoubtedly one of them, sin, is the chief. But for *it*, false doctrine and woe had had no place in our world, and but for it they would doubtless gradually but rapidly disappear before the light and warmth of universal holiness. Hence, while the word *darkness* stands for each and all of them, it conveys chiefly the idea of the moral gloom of sin. Accordingly, the apostle's phrase in the text, “works of darkness,” means the works of wickedness, not excluding the ignorance and misery which are ever the allies of wickedness.

I propose, on the present occasion, to call your attention to one particular work of darkness, and to show that no man, and especially no Christian, should have any fellowship with it, but rather reprove it. I refer to the strengthening, extending, and perpetuating of human slavery, in this our so-called land of liberty. But here the question may arise in some of your minds, “is it right and proper to style this aggrandiz-

ing of the institution of slavery a work of darkness?" I reply that there can be nothing more right and proper, and shall proceed to give the proof.

WHAT THEN IS SLAVERY? It is the degradation of human beings, as far as possible, or as far as may suit the convenience or desires of the masters, to a level with the brutes. Slaves are the property of their lords, and as truly articles of merchandise, as are cattle and swine. They are propagated, raised, fed, worked, bought and sold, like the domestic animals. They are valued according to their capacities for labor, or their adaptation to the fancy of the owner or purchaser. If they fail to fulfill the wishes of their master, they are liable to be, and often are punished with greater severity than the brutes. If they attempt to gain their freedom, they are pursued and hunted with bloodhounds and rifles. If they sustain the nominal or real relations of husbands, wives, parents, children, brothers and sisters, they are torn asunder and hopelessly separated at the will of those who own them. Comely females are sold on the auction-block to the highest bidder, to be sold again perhaps at a higher price, for purposes that can not be named.

The wretched victims of slavery have no legal rights. They can enter no complaint against their white oppressors, no matter what be the kind or degree of abuse they suffer. No court of law can admit their testimony. They have no wages for their toils, no redress for their wrongs, no security for their natural rights, no chance for accumulating property, no facilities for educating their children, no hope of an improvement of their condition, no prospect in their future of anything better than the meager enjoyments which are possible to be mixed up with the hardships, the cruelties, the untold and unspeakable horrors of *slavery*. Even for a benevolent person to venture to teach them to read the Word of God, is itself an offence against the laws, the penalty of which is imprisonment. And if their owners, moved by an impulse of humanity, or possibly by the suggestions of self-interest, should desire to set them free, they can do so only by removing them beyond the limits of slavery into some region

where government recognizes and protects the manhood and the rights of all the posterity of Adam. Nor if their present circumstances be those of comfort and happiness, is there any safe-guard against their being plunged into the deepest abyss of human woe, in the event of the death, or the bankruptcy of the man or woman whose property they are. In no sense does the slave belong to himself any more than your horse or ox belongs to itself.

Such is SLAVERY in this free country. Such is the condition of some four millions of our countrymen at the present time. Four millions of men, women and children, rational, accountable, and immortal, having all the faculties and sensibilities that we have, made like ourselves in the image of God, in a state of brutal subjection to irresponsible masters! This my hearers is the truth. It is not a misrepresentation. The picture is not over drawn. It does not come up to the awful reality. If you doubt it, read the statutes of the slaveholding states, read the unimpeachable testimony of countless witnesses, read the record of facts almost interminable, and as black and horrible as the smoke that ascendeth up forever and ever.

Should any one present be disposed to talk about the happiness of many of the slaves, and to argue that they are better off than if free, let him ask the fugitives who brave all possible dangers to escape from their thralldom, what *they* think; or let him suppose himself his wife and his children to be in the very mildest state of slavery, and conjecture what would be the answer of his and their *experience* in regard to the sweetness of that servitude. No, no, no, my friends, American slavery in its very best conditions is an accursed thing; but considered as a system organized and guarded by law, strengthened by wealth and political power, incorporated with and thoroughly ramifying society, and inwrought with individual life throughout its whole vast area, it is a most gigantic evil, a most monstrous wrong, a fabric of Satanic wickedness, a work of the blackest darkness.

If this be so, and it can not be denied, then, is it much more an evil, a wrong, a work of darkness to add to its

strength to widen its domain, to lengthen its duration. If with its present power and within its present limits it be a curse too great to be expressed, and too awful to be calmly and silently endured, then to make it more powerful, to give it a broader territory, to secure its perpetuity indefinitely through the generations and ages to come, is an immeasurable iniquity. To forge stronger fetters for the already hopeless slave, to spread the blight of this woe over regions not yet darkened and damned with its presence, purposely to cut off every hope of a termination of the evil, in every way to intensify the curse, this, *this* is wickedness sufficiently enormous to satisfy the most grasping and capacious depravity of either man or devil.

But has this work been attempted? Is there a purpose, and are corresponding efforts put forth, to render slavery in our country a greater evil than it has been hitherto? The question scarce needs an answer, for the facts are patent as the day. No man who knows the history of our federal legislation for forty years past, no man who knows the spirit that has animated the slave power during the same period, can be ignorant of the deliberate, unfaltering, and most effective purpose of the partisans of slavery to extend its dominion and make it as permanent as the republic itself. Has not the absurd dogma that "*Slavery is the corner-stone of Freedom*" been pertinacious maintained, and with all the power of argument, by southern statesmen, editors and authors? Has not the boastful and infamous threat been uttered in the halls of Congress that the time shall come when the slave-master will read the roll-call of his negroes on Bunker Hill? Has not the renewal of the African slave-trade been openly and earnestly advocated? Nay, has it not been actually and successfully carried on? Has not the annexation of that fertile island "The Queen of the Antilles," been a favorite project of the defenders of slavery, and with a special view to the extending of the area of human bondage? Was not the admission of California to our confederacy stoutly withstood, because she proposed to come in without the condition of slavery?

But not to dwell longer on these conclusive proofs of the purpose of the slave-power to gain for slavery supreme and enduring dominion in our nation, let me ask you, what mean the scenes of anarchy and blood that have of late been enacted in the territory of Kansas, and are not yet completed, and which, it is feared, will prove only the prelude to more sanguinary crimes and more diabolic wickedness both there and in other parts of our land? The explanation is simple and brief. In the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and fifty-four, the friends of human chattelism, having the whole influence and authority of the federal administration, legislature, and judiciary on their side, and not content with the advantages previously gained over the friends of human rights, broke their plighted faith with their opponents, and violated a compact which had been held as sacred by the most eminent statesmen on both sides of the controversy for more than a third of a century. By this treacherous act they opened to the inroads of slavery a vast territory from which it had been excluded by a solemn legislative enactment, which was expected and intended to continue in force *forever*. This was done on the avowed principle that the people of the territory ought to be allowed the right of popular sovereignty, and be left to decide for themselves what institutions they would establish or reject. But when it was found that they would exclude slavery from their limits by an overwhelming majority, its advocates resolved to plant the system there, despite the opposition and abhorrence of the inhabitants. To this end armed bands from the slave states made repeated invasions into that territory, and by threats of violence and blood both hindered the people from exercising their sacred right of ballot, and assumed to vote themselves where they had no more right to vote than in the dominions of the British queen. Far from satisfied with the illegal elections by which they forced a spurious legislation and a most iniquitous government on the territory, they ventured on an extensive plan of rapine and murder, changed happy wives and children into maniac widows and homeless orphans, spread desolation and fear and woe throughout that whole region, and, for a present

result, have raised a tempest of excited and wrathful passion in every part of our country, more fierce and portentous than any that has darkened the land for two hundred years.

But you say "we don't believe these stories." Don't believe them! Do you believe the earth rolls on its axis? Do you believe the sun rises and sets? Why, my friends, to fabricate such reports as these which come to our ears from Kansas, to gain for them such a world-wide publicity, to support them by such a mass of testimony as confirms the truth of these accounts;—to invent and publish, and sustain by evidence, such an amount of falsehood, would be altogether beyond the utmost limits of human impudence and ingenuity. If these reports concerning the outrages in Kansas are not true, their invention and circulation for a period of eighteen months, the ever-increasing proof of their correctness and the almost entire want of opposing evidence, constitute one of the miracles of the nineteenth century.

But not only in that distant territory has the slave-power trampled on law and justice and humanity to carry out its nefarious designs. In the very senate chamber of the United States has been perpetrated, on behalf of slavery, a deed of infamy unparalleled in the history of any legislative body in Christendom. In that venerable and sacred Temple of Freedom, because a high-souled son of Massachusetts, endowed with genius, his capacious mind stored with the choicest learning, his heart glowing with the purest and noblest sentiments of patriotism and philanthropy; because this man, the pride of New England and one of the brightest ornaments of American scholarship and statesmanship, because he dared to stand up in his place and speak boldly and grandly for freedom and for man, in words of lofty eloquence and irresistible argument, and not without scathing sarcasm and blighting ridicule, and pure though burning indignation; because he dared to do his duty to his constituents, to bleeding Kansas, to the prostrate and supplicating form of Liberty, to his country and to God; because he dared to do this, although during the two days' delivery of his great oration, not one of his forty eager and watchful foes could detect a word for which



they might interrupt the flow of his speech by a call to order—I say because he *dared* to do this he was assaulted by a “son of chivalry” yet a ruffian, by one who presumes to talk about his “honor as a gentleman” yet one into whose brow has been burned the brand of cowardice too deep to be effaced till the worms consume his body, by him, a groveling worshipper at the shrine of negro-slavery, was he assaulted and felled to the ground as the butcher fells his ox.

Such is the proof that the slave-power in this republic is aiming to strengthen, extend and perpetuate human bondage; and such are the transactions and scenes which result from the execution of their infernal plot. If this is not a work of darkness, what is? Considering the age in which we live, the principles and institutions we have received from our fathers, the wars of speech and of sword which we have waged for liberty, the universal boast of freedom which our citizens are ever making to echo through the world, the professed ascendancy of Christianity in our nation, and our actual religious privileges; considering these things, I see not how human wickedness could easily devise a more darkly iniquitous undertaking than this of aggrandizing the American system of slavery. Never were words more fitly used than in applying the Apostle’s phrase “work of darkness” to this masterpiece of depravity, this multiplying “the sum of all villainies” into itself and thus making it a universal and unending woe.

Let it not be said that so dire a scheme can not succeed in this age and nation, and that therefore it is a superfluous work to oppose it. Undoubtedly it will not succeed, but our faith rests, not on the natural impossibility of its success, but on the evidence there is that it will be fatally withstood. The world is not yet so in love with righteousness, the Gospel of holiness has not yet gained such a supremacy in the hearts of the American people, as to preclude the hope or the fear that slavery will hereafter become a national institution, unless its progress be actively and perseveringly resisted by the lovers of human well-being and of the glory of God. Leave slavery to itself and to its zealous, determined, and powerful supporters, and it will override the land, and pollute and desolate

every part of this heritage of God with its foul and ruinous contagion. And because the friends of freedom believe this monster will be stayed in its destructive march, be shorn of its strength, turned back, and finally annihilated by the warfare to be made on it by those who hate it as they hate all injustice, oppression, and sin, and *only* by this warfare; therefore are they resolved to fight against it with tongue and pen, with the prayer of faith, and with the whole armor of God on the right hand and on the left, as long as their strength shall last and the evil endure. And they cherish this resolve with high confidence and courage, because the Lord is on their side, because they see him mustering his hosts to the battle, because thousands of his ministers and millions of his people are ready or making ready for the conflict.

Nor let it be imagined that they who believe it is the will of their Divine Master that they should lift up their voices like a trumpet against transgression and sin, when once they have been convinced of their duty to declare the truth on this subject, will be deterred from doing so by the cry of "politics and the pulpit." That cry has no terrors for the man who feels that he is serving God. May the day never come in New England when the preacher can be cowed and silenced by the politician. Woe betide the people whose ministers shall fear to tell them their whole duty and to rebuke every one of their sins. But there is no sincerity in this outcry against political preaching. I once elsewhere preached a sermon on the legal prohibition of the sale of alcoholic liquors, and was loudly commended for the act and requested to repeat the discourse, by the very men who were afterward wrought into a towering rage by another sermon from these same lips denouncing the infamous fugitive slave law, while there was just as much of politics in the one as in the other. Let a minister preach on their side and politicians will not object to his preaching politics.

Having now, at perhaps too great length, described this work of darkness, let us proceed to examine the inspired injunction *to have no fellowship with it*. Observe, my brethren, that this apostolic counsel refers to *works*, and not to the

*workers.* The distinction is an important one. There may be a condition of things which shall require of the lovers of holiness to avoid the society of wicked men. As a general rule of prudence the young and the facile may be earnestly exhorted to shun the company of the ungodly lest they be led astray. But such is the structure of society, such are the mutual relations of men, that there is a necessity on them to intermingle constantly in the duties and enjoyments of life, without regard to moral character and conduct. Hence the Word of God no where teaches it to be a sin for the evil and the good to associate together, but on the contrary it admits that if the two classes were to separate one from the other, one or the other "must needs go out of the world." Bad as may be the work in which wicked men are engaged, they are not themselves to be shunned like the leper, but to be received as companions and coadjutors of the pure and the good in every labor or pleasure in which they can be united without a compromise of principle. Everywhere they are to be treated with kindness and courtesy, and to be commended for all their excellent qualities of mind and heart, and for all their praiseworthy acts and influence. But while this intercourse of the followers of God with evil workers is both allowable and necessary, we have a very different doctrine in respect of evil works. On this point our text is most positive and explicit. It declares without qualification or ambiguity that with *them* we must have no fellowship. Therefore may we have no fellowship with the work of fortifying and enlarging the system of slavery.

But in what does fellowship with this work consist? In a hearty sympathy with it, in the cordial approval of it, in a desire for its progress and success; and this too, whether the desire, the approval, the sympathy be openly declared or concealed within the breast; for, be it remembered, that that God against whom it is insisted that this whole work is a heinous sin, takes knowledge of the thoughts and feelings as truly as of overt acts.

They have fellowship with this wickedness who use their influence with the *intention* of promoting it; they who inten-

tionally promote it, not from any love or admiration of it, but for the sake of some other object, to the gaining of which the furtherance of slavery seems indispensable; they who use their influence to carry it on from a want of courage and decision to refuse; they who subserve it out of regard to friends and associates whom they are not willing to alienate by declining to coöperate with them in so base a cause; in short, all who in any way voluntarily and intelligently aid the peculiar institution of the South,—all such have fellowship with it. But all such fellowship is sternly forbidden in the text, for, as has been shown, the strengthening of the slave-power is a work of darkness. God can not be otherwise than displeased with him who aids in such a work, or secretly sympathizes with it, or silently wishes it success. No man has a right to use the influence which God has given him in promoting an object which God condemns. No man has a right to make money, or gain friends, or secure the power and profit of office by unholy means. No man has a right as an elector *to cast his vote* in favor of any scheme of iniquity. Therefore it makes no difference who has undertaken this work of confirming and protracting the existence of slavery, high or low, many or few, the president of the republic or a village politician, the aristocracy of the South, or the time-servers of the North, no man can enlist with them in the enterprise except by joining forces with Satan to fight against God. No matter how great the apparent good to be secured by abetting the cause of slavery,—that great good will be no excuse for the act. The end does not justify the means. Men may not do evil that good may come. The opposite doctrine is the doctrine of devils and sanctions all possible iniquity.

But notwithstanding the wickedness of the thing, there is in fact an extensive fellowship with the promotion of slavery on the part of those from whom we have a right to expect better things. There is a large portion of the white population at the South agreeing with us that their “peculiar institution” is an evil and a sin, who yet do nothing to abate it. Their consciences condemn it, but pecuniary advantage or domestic and social comfort induce them to uphold it. In

multitudes of cases both conscience and interest would strongly incline them to oppose it, but their natural lack of energy to cope with the evil, their fear of a frowning public sentiment, their mistaken subjection to statesmen and demagogues who make use of slavery as an engine of political power, keep them silent and inert. It is not to be denied that their position is one of extreme delicacy and difficulty,—possibly of peril. But a real manliness of spirit, a true American independence, a genuine Christian courage, a self-sacrificing love of righteousness and devotion to principle, would qualify them to exert a mighty agency for the undermining and overthrow of that towering system of oppression, and cruelty, and sin, which darkens with its shadow all that fair land. Instead of this they quietly hold fellowship with the iniquity, and thus lend their influence to make it progressive and everlasting.

But at the North there is a far more guilty coöperating with the slave power. Is it not a pitiful spectacle, that of a great benevolent publishing society, circulating through the country its tracts which denounce the use of tobacco, novel reading, dancing, and sleeping in church, but at the same time effacing from its pages every sentence and word which rebukes the monstrous wickedness of slavery?

Is it not most mournful to behold the ministers of the Son of God elaborately defending slavery, declaring it a scriptural and divine institution, publicly approving of the most violent pro-slavery legislation, and exhorting the liberty-loving people of New England to be quiet and patient and peaceful in view of the growth and extension in our own land of the hugest wickedness under heaven?

And then think of the editors of powerful newspapers, both secular and religious, who are everlastingly perverting God's truth and debauching the public conscience on the subject of slavery!

Think of our statesmen, our legislators, our great and little politicians, who seem willing to sell themselves, body and soul, for time and eternity, to the slave power, if so they can

secure the ascendancy of their respective parties, and gain for themselves the emoluments and honors of office !

Above all, think how great numbers of our citizens in private life, our merchants and manufacturers, our farmers and mechanics and laborers, many of them members of our churches, professed followers of Jesus Christ,—think how they are blindly led, by party influences, by pecuniary interests, and often by a kind of dogged stubbornness of prejudice, to uphold and strengthen the slave power ! O, it is most shamefully wicked !

But the inspired writer styles the works of darkness “unfruitful.” In order to understand the true significance of this word in this connection, it must be borne in mind that the idea of *fruit* is that of a result which affords pleasure, satisfaction or joy. It must also be remembered, that although some of the results of any particular work or thing, be in themselves desirable, yet if in the aggregate there be a preponderance of evil, we pronounce that work or thing *unprofitable*. And this is the meaning of the word “unfruitful” in our text. It will now be shown that *slavery is unprofitable*, and therefore that the work of adding to its strength, or extent, or duration, is infinitely to be deplored as inexpedient and ruinous.

Not that it has done no good and will not do more. For in this world of sin the various forms of wickedness are ever fighting with each other, and abating or neutralizing the consequent evils, and even evolving positive good. And under the supreme control of an all-wise God, we may believe that every wrong in the universe will in some way be made to subserve his purposes, and bring a revenue of glory to his own great name, and enhance the immortal joys of his redeemed. But no man in his senses will contend that therefore iniquity is to be encouraged as the means of promoting the divine glory or human happiness. “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church,” but we may not therefore call Nero, and Louis XIV., and other persecutors of the saints, servants of God and benefactors of man. So the blood of the noble Sumner has proved to be the seed of liberty, but

not therefore may we regard the human being who almost slew him, with any other feelings than condemnation and abhorrence, unless by divine grace we mingle therewith some element of Christian pity.

But with such exceptions, which are to be attributed, not to any intrinsic excellence of the thing itself, but to extraneous causes and divine agency, slavery is UNPROFITABLE.

*To the slaves.* I shall waste no time to prove this. As well might one make an argument to convince mankind that poverty, disease, ignorance, vice, domestic misery and social degradation, are unprofitable to the individuals or classes who are cursed with any or all of these woes. It is enough to know that the slaves themselves regard their bondage as unprofitable, for they have the best facilities for understanding its nature, as they have clearly the best right to judge of the advantages of their condition.

*To the poor whites at the South.* A single anecdote illustrating this point will suffice. When the notorious Major Buford was raising his regiment of desperadoes to assist in establishing African bondage in Kansas, the father of one of the recruits addressed his son, just before his departure, in terms of most earnest and intense remonstrance against his becoming a party to so great a crime. "How is this, sir?" said a bystander, on whose direct testimony the incident is now related, "Are not you a slaveholder?" "I am," was the reply, "but I came here many years since a poor man; I know from experience all about the miseries of competition between slave labor and free labor, and am not willing to see such a curse inflicted on any people now exempt from it.

*To the slave-masters and their families.* For, by living from infancy on the labor of their fellow-men the slaves,—labor which is exacted by force and violence and never paid for, and receiving every personal service from their bondmen and bondwomen throughout their lives, they become indolent, incapable of helping themselves in the simplest matters of personal comfort, and disqualified to earn a livelihood by manual toil. On the other hand, accustomed from childhood to exercise authority over their negroes, they become conse-

quential, intolerant of restraint and opposition, haughty, imperious, and lordly; used to the dirk, the pistol, and the bludgeon; ever ready to revenge an insult with blood either under the impulse of momentary passion, or with cool deliberation and murderous intent on "the field of honor." The arts of honorable industry are despised among them, because the idea of labor is associated in their minds with that of servitude. The indolent and luxurious ease in which they live, and the means of which are procured by working or selling their slaves, operates as a powerful check on the spirit of enterprise, hindering the development of their agricultural resources, and discouraging commerce, manufactures, science and letters. That they look with contempt on labor, is sufficiently evident from the remark made to the preacher by a southern doctor of divinity, (and expressing the general sentiment of the slaveholders,) that "the food and clothing which the slaves receive are pay enough for the *work-people* in any country."

That slavery is hostile to mental cultivation and popular intelligence is obvious from the fact that they can not build up and sustain a high order of institutions of learning on their own soil, but are compelled to send their sons and daughters to the free North to be thoroughly educated;—that they publicly denounce our common school systems as unfit to be introduced among themselves because perilous to their darling slavery;—and from the boast of the present governor of Virginia, that "*there is no newspaper in his county.*" Whether these facts, and sentiments, and characteristics, are consonant with the spirit of true democracy, and favorable to free principles and institutions, or opposed thereto; whether they are a blessing or a curse, an honor or a disgrace to the slaveocracy at the South, let every hearer judge for himself.

Besides all this, a volume might be written showing by cogent argument and undeniable facts, that the influence of slavery on morals and religion in the slave-holding States is melancholy in the extreme. But I forbear to enlarge on this part of the subject, and ask you to consider whether such an incubus resting on one-half of our republic, crippling the



energies, and blighting almost every element of the prosperity of the people there, must not necessarily exert a pernicious influence on the free states; whether the liberty and happiness of every part of the confederacy are not imperiled by the haughty demands and threatening encroachments of slavery; whether the perpetuity of our union is not in jeopardy; whether the sacred cause of human freedom throughout the world is not every day impeded by the domination of the slave-power here in America. To these questions there can be only an affirmative reply. Slavery and the promoting of it are therefore, in view of all that has now been said on this point, a most unprofitable work of darkness.

But the same doctrine is true in another and a graver sense. If, as has been shown, it be a sin to assist in executing the designs of the advocates of slavery, then, although these designs should be entirely successful, the personal guilt of those who aid in them can not be overlooked or forgotten at the day of final reckoning with God. Because for every sin there is a judgment and a penalty. If therefore, my hearers, you are tampering with slavery in any manner; if you are helping to strengthen and extend and perpetuate it; if you are doing this by your words, your money, or your votes, no matter for what purpose you do it, whether for personal advantage or for the success of your political party; no matter how completely you blind your eyes to the enormity of your conduct by shutting out the light which would expose it; I declare to you before God my belief that you are incurring alarming guilt in his sight by having fellowship with this work of darkness. This, surely, is something for every one to think of. Whatever temporal benefit may seem to result from the abetting of slavery, if they who burden their souls with this wickedness go to the bar of God without repentance and pardon, they will find their work of darkness most dreadfully unprofitable. For, "what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Let every man then beware how he connives at, or sympathizes with, or openly approves of, or directly aids the slave-power of the

South, lest he receive the wages of his sin at the tribunal of his Maker.

But the text does not merely forbid us to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; it adds to this prohibition the command—“*but rather reprove them.*” It is not enough to keep aloof from slavery. We do not fulfill our whole duty in respect of it, by simply and entirely withholding our agency and influence from its support. This is but a negative work. We must resist and oppose it by means of reproof. We may not be silent and inactive while the huge evil is gathering strength, and increasing its resources, and spreading its dark pall over our whole land, and threatening to defile if not to destroy every thing sacred and precious to ourselves and our country and millions yet unborn. In our families, in our social intercourse, in the pulpit, in the popular assembly, in the newspaper, by argument, by a statement of facts, by the doctrines of God’s Word, by solemn censure, by indignant denunciation, by all the means in our power, and at all times and places, according as circumstances and our conscientious judgment shall warrant or require, must we rebuke this growing system of wickedness. Other kinds of resistance may become necessary; what they shall be, future emergencies will decide. But this opposition of the intellect and judgment; this resistance of the soul, the heart, the conscience; this antagonism of our Christian faith and godliness, of our patriotism and benevolence,—expressed in spoken and written language with the eloquence of sincerity, earnestness, courage and ardor,—this sort of opposition to slavery is demanded *now*.

But in order to make this reproof effective it must correspond to the greatness of the sin. It is not to be handled like a tender babe, as if it might be hurt by our roughness. It is to be spoken and written of according to its deserts. And that the treatment it receives may be seen to be just, its mask must be taken off, and its hideous features exposed to the broad glare of truth. The infamous doctrine that God’s inspired Book approves and sanctifies such a combination of iniquities and horrors as we behold in American slavery, must be shown to be, as it is,

a child of him whom Jesus called the father of lies and a murderer from the beginning. The sophistries, and falsehoods, which have been woven together and thrown around this giant monster as a garment of truth and beauty to make it seem comely and attractive, as among the loveliest of God's gifts to men, must be torn to shreds, in order that the deformities and abominations of slavery may become so apparent that the "fools and blind" shall see them. Nor is this an impossible task. Difficult it undoubtedly is. Slavery can not bear to have its nakedness seen. Tear its covering to tatters if you will, it will cling to its rags, sew up its rents, apply patches of divers shapes and colors, divert your gaze to other objects, do anything to hide its loathsomeness. But it can not altogether succeed. Already has its real character been so clearly set forth that tens of thousands, who a few years ago saw in it but little to dislike and condemn, now see in it nothing to love and everything to abhor. And under the power of that reproof which has been described the work of exposure will go on, we may believe, until the masses of our nation, South and North, will learn to disown and denounce it in fit terms of reprobation. For there is a power in truth, when supported by all the faculties of the mind and by all the aroused and glowing sensibilities of the heart, which can not be withstood. Thus fortified and quickened, it becomes like a two-edged sword, sharpened and burnished, with the grasp of a bony hand on its hilt, and wielded by the brawny arm of a stalwart soldier. Truth thus used will open a way for itself to the understandings and consciences even of the sincerest defenders of slavery, and cause them to look with shame and loathing on the black and damnable thing which they have so long loved and adored. Yes, my friends, let all the lovers of liberty use this God-appointed agency for the overthrow of slavery, and they will not spend their strength in vain. The power of rebuke will avail. The indignation of awakened millions will, if it has not already, kindle a fire in the land that will not be quenched until slavery shall have ceased to exist, or at least until it shall have learned to be content and quiet within its present boundaries.

Such is slavery,—a work of infernal darkness, vastly unprofitable and destructive, infinitely unworthy of our fellowship, and deserving the most severe and withering rebuke.

In conclusion, my hearers, I earnestly exhort you to ponder the truths you have heard, to reflect on your personal relations to this stupendous wickedness, and to take care that it receives from you no support or sympathy. Think of it not as a mere matter of speculation, but of grave practical concern. Remember, too, that not one of you, probably, will fail to exert an influence either for or against it. By apathy or zeal, by silence or speech, by sloth or action, every member of our churches, every citizen of our republic, not to say every individual in our country, will do something, greater or less, for the increase or the abatement, the growth or the overthrow of slavery. Therefore I beseech of you by every earthly and eternal interest of man to make sure of being right in this regard. As you desire the spread of knowledge, the growth of science, the improvement of art, and the increase of all the means of human happiness, have no fellowship with slavery. By your love of liberty, and virtue, and religion; by the value of our federal union—more precious to us than anything *save* freedom, and virtue, and Christianity; by your regard for the well-being of the generations that are to live on our soil in the centuries to come; by that true Christian philanthropy which embraces in its arms the whole world of mankind, present and future; by your zeal for the sacred and inalienable rights of man; by your reverence for the authority and justice of God, and your fear of his holy and terrible displeasure against guilty nations and individuals; by all these considerations do I appeal to you to have no fellowship with that vast and awful system of iniquity—*American Slavery.*